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not making locomotives on the plan of horses and elephants? A palaeographer does not sneer at a stenographer because he finds it convenient to make an *f* without the consecrated Snail's horns.

In certain points of detail, however, it seems, to one looking at it from the outside, to have some defects.

First, the almost total omission of the letter *r*, (apparently as a concession to the Chinese) which gives rise to such Aztec-like words as *dlenön*, *tlelön*.

Secondly, the placing the accent invariably on the last syllable, so that the whole accentuation shifts with every additional suffix. Thus:

VÒLAPÜK

VOLÀPÜKÁ

VÒLAPÜKATÍD

VOLÀPÜKATIDÉL.

Surely it would have been better to attach the accentuation to the significant stems.

The third defect is really important, and that is the lack of a definite article, without which precision of expression cannot be had. Thus, in the bit of translation given above, it is impossible to render Bunyan's phrase, "*the wilderness of this world*," in Volapük. The words given mean "*a wilderness*," which is altogether different.

After all, the only important question is: does Volapük sufficiently supply the requisites of an international medium of communication?—that is, is it adequate for the ordinary purposes of life; and is it preëminently easy of acquisition, of use, and of understanding? On this the present writer expresses no opinion. *Judicabit orbis terrarum*: that is to say, the final verdict on the merits of pudgens must rest on *à posteriori* grounds.

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THE OLD FRENCH MERLIN.

Merlin, roman en prose du XIII^e siècle, publié avec la mise en prose du poème de Merlin de Robert de Boron, d'après le manuscrit appartenant à M. Alfred H. Huth, par GASTON PARIS et JACOB ULRICH: Paris, 1886, 2 vols. XCI-280, 308 pp. 8vo. (Publication of the Société des Anciens Textes Français).

By the publication of the Huth MS. the Early French Text Society turns its attention for the first time to the Arthurian legends. The version of 'Merlin' which it here gives is found in but one MS., unfortunately incomplete, belonging to the end of the XIII. or to the beginning of the XIV. century. It contains, as preserved, three works: 1st, a prose version of 'Joseph of Arimathea' by Robert de Boron, of which many MSS. exist and which has been published by Weidner; 2d, a prose version of 'Merlin,' by the same author, not published in modern times; 3d, a unique and incomplete version of a continuation to 'Merlin.' Owing to the edition of Weidner the 'Joseph' has here been omitted. From the linguistic standpoint the MS. offers nothing remarkable: the writing is French, evidently by many successive scribes, but shows still marks of Picard or Wallon dialect. The few words of interest are gathered into a Vocabulary, which is followed by an analytical table of proper names and by an analysis of the work. From the literary point of view, however, the Huth 'Merlin' is of much importance in the history of the Breton cycle, and the Introduction by M. Paris is therefore devoted principally to the discussion of certain of these new features. As noted above, the editors have published that part of the Huth MS. which contains a prose version of the 'Merlin' of Robert de Boron,—the poetical original exists only as a fragment of 504 v., published by Michel,—and a 'Merlin' which claims to be a sequel to it. The former stopped at the crowning of Arthur, as had been stated by Paulin Paris, and it was the second in a series of three poems by Robert on the Grail legend. This author, Robert de Boron, as M. Paris determines, must have written before 1201, and have revised his cycle after 1212, the

date of the death of his collaborator, Gautier de Montbéliard. Possibly also a fourth poem should be reckoned among his works, the third in the series, on the deeds of Alain; but all trace of it is lost. He himself was probably a native of North-eastern France, from many vague indications in his poems, none of which however are conclusive. Of the three poems known to have been his, the third, 'Perceval,' exists only in prose, in a much altered MS. of the XIV. century.

Passing to the sources of the works before us, M. Paris determines that the 'Merlin' is made up from the 'Historia Britonum,' a translation of which Robert had read and partially remembered, or which had been orally transmitted to him. The story of Geoffrey he changes at will or enlarges from popular stories concerning Merlin (a subject which M. Paris promises to treat in the *Romania*), with notions borrowed perhaps from the Gospel of Nicodemus. His entire ignorance of England is seen in the topography of his work: Carlon he does not mention; but at Carduel, by the advice of Merlin, Uter founds the Round Table (Wace gives Arthur) after the model of those of the Saviour and Joseph, which has, like theirs, an empty seat that shall not be filled until in the next reign a knight shall come (evidently Percival) who shall have accomplished the search for the Grail. Another variation due to Robert, in order to increase the importance of Merlin, is the concealment for fifteen years of Arthur, who then alone of all is able to draw the sword of royal authority from the magic anvil.¹

According to Robert, it was the mother of Kay who nursed the infant Arthur and who was consequently obliged to intrust her own son to a stranger of low birth. Thus the character of Kay was tainted by the milk of a menial (a common notion in the Middle Ages), and he became "fel et faus et vilains." We have here an ingenious explanation both for the evil traits of Kay in the poems from the time

of Chrétien de Troies and for the indulgence of Arthur towards him.

The 'Merlin' of Robert had a sequel by his own hand, the 'Perceval' (perhaps also an intermediate poem on the adventures of Alain). The 'Perceval' did not, however, meet with much favor; it was soon crowded out of the series by the 'Lancelot,' which new arrangement of the story demanded a connecting link that should relate the end of Merlin's adventures and the history of Arthur up to the arrival of Lancelot. Several writers tried to fill the gap. The one of the Huth MS. evidently had the least success, as other versions were preferred to his.

His work proceeds from the crowning of Arthur, and to be consistent he claims to be Robert de Boron. M. Paris shows by many discrepancies that he is not. A character for deceit being thus established in the anonymous writer, another falsification which interests literary history is easily pointed out. The continuator of the 'Merlin' of the Huth MS. pretends that he is translating from a Latin book on the legend of the Grail and that to lighten his task he has asked his lord "Helye, qui a esté mes compains a armes," to translate a branch of the book which he calls "li contes del brait." Further on he shows Hélie at work, and finally declares that the branch is finished. All this, with other allusions, proves that there existed a work, probably in prose, called 'li Contes del Brait,' from the last cry of Merlin, written by a certain Hélie. This story is lost in French, but is partially preserved here and there in a Spanish translation of 'Merlin' bearing the title of 'El Baladro del sabio Merlin.' The rubrics and the closing chapter of this translation are appended by M. Paris to the Introduction. From these references the story may be drawn, somewhat as follows: Baudemagus, angered at seeing Tor, his junior, given a seat before him at the Round Table, leaves the court of Arthur, undergoes many adventures, and finally arrives in the forest of Darnantes. In this same forest, four days before, Merlin had been shut up in the 'Tomb of the Lovers' by Ninienne,² to whom he had taught his arts.

¹This idea M. Paris would trace to biblical legends: the rod of Joseph which buds, thus designing him to be the husband of Mary; or to episodes in other poems of the cycle. A more striking parallel seems to me to be found in the German epic, where Siegmund draws the sword from the oak, unless perhaps, indeed, the latter may have been the original of a popular story which had crept over the German border and which was utilized by Robert.

²This appears to be the true form of the name: also Niniane, Nivienne, etc. Vivienne or Viviane seem to be wrong readings of the MSS.

On it she had replaced the sword, which ten men could scarcely lift, and had sealed it to the tomb by incantations. Attracted by the laments of Merlin, Baudemagus strives to raise the sword, but is told by the sage that no one save her who placed him there can free him. In terror Baudemagus falls to the ground, whereupon "un poco despues de hora nona" (the allusion is obvious and might suggest the origin of the notion) Merlin utters his last cry, which sounded through the kingdom of Logres. The candles in the hands of the thirteen kings went out and many marvels were accomplished, as Merlin himself had predicted.³

The author of this story is without doubt a person called Hélie, a name not infrequent among writers of the Middle Ages. Who this particular Hélie may be is not yet determined, but the allusions to him in the Huth MS. have been curiously twisted. From a comrade in arms of the pretended Robert de Boron he becomes (in subsequent stories as in 'Guiron le Courtois' and in an epilog to 'Tristan') a relative of Robert; and finally blooms out into literary history as a writer on the Grail, Hélie de Boron—all of which is exploded by the publication of the original. Seeking now the sources of the sequel to the 'Merlin' of the Huth MS. M. Paris finds that it is, in large part, a development of indications found in the 'Conte du Brait,' 'Lancelot,' 'Mort Arthur' and the prose 'Tristan,' all of which were unknown to Robert de Boron. Other material was doubtless drawn from various episodes of Breton stories, and the whole supplemented by poor inventions of the author himself. As the readers of the Middle Ages preferred other sequels of the 'Merlin' of Robert to this, its influence in France was not important. It offers, however, peculiar interest to English-speaking peoples, in that it was employed, much abridged, by Malory. It serves the latter as the original for his first four books, minus chapters v-xvi of Book I, which are taken from the common

³The end of Merlin is much more dramatic than that in the ordinary version and, so far as we can ascertain in the Huth MS., Vivien appears in a much more favorable light. Merlin teaches her his art in order to win her over, and she, while preserving her honor, hates him for his intentions and finally destroys him, thus strongly pointing a moral.

version of 'Merlin.' The author of the Huth MS. wrote not far from 1225-30; was probably from North-east France; like Robert de Boron he did not know England.

Having thus analyzed the MS. as preserved, M. Paris passes to a conjecture of the nature of the part that is lost. He points out that the anonymous author has given an intimation of his plan in a passage on folio 125 of the MS. There he states that the narrative will be divided into three equal parts of 125 folios each: the first corresponds to the 'Joseph' and the 'Merlin' of Robert de Boron, plus 50 folios of the continuation; the second reaches to the commencement of the Grail, and in the Huth MS. lacks about 20 folios; the third ends with the death of Lancelot and Mark, and is entirely wanting. This third part M. Paris concludes, from the allusions in 'Merlin' and in other works that refer to 'Merlin,' to be a *Quest* of the Grail. This 'Quest,' like the 'Merlin,' was attributed to Robert de Boron; was known to the author of the prose 'Tristan;' and resembled greatly the 'Quest' commonly assigned to Walter Map, in fact was probably the original of the latter, which was early incorporated into the 'Lancelot.'

This prediction was unexpectedly verified the same year it was made (M. Paris signs the Introduction July 14th, 1887), and in a manner most flattering to the penetration of M. Paris, by the publication of a Portuguese translation of the 'Quest' (See NOTES III, col. 49) by Dr. von Reinhardtstöttner, which is in reality the missing part of the work of the pretended Robert de Boron (See *Romania* XVI, p. 582). The importance of this discovery on the history of the cycle we may hope to see demonstrated soon by M. Paris himself.⁴

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⁴So far as determined, the work on the Grail legend in its early form may be thus arranged: Robert de Boron is the author of at least three poems which are preserved as follows 'Joseph of Arimathea,' of which we possess the original complete and several MSS. of the prose versions; 'Merlin,' original 504 v., and several MSS. of the prose version; 'Perceval,' one MS. of the prose version. The 'Perceval,' being unpopular, gave way to another conclusion, which necessitated a connecting story. Thus, for 'Perceval' in the plan of Robert we have a 'Sequel to Merlin' and a 'Quest,' which latter was finally united to the 'Lancelot.'